

The Purebred Dairy Cattle Association Dairy Cow Unified Scorecard is the base we use for judging dairy cows. The latest version of the scorecard was published in 2009 and has 4 categories: Frame, Dairy Strength, Rear Feet and Legs and Udder. The scorecard gives us the ideal picture of a dairy cow.

Dairy Cow Unified Scorecard

Breed characteristics should be considered in the application of this scorecard.

There are four major breakdowns on which to base a cow's evaluation. Each trait is broken down into body parts to be considered and ranked.

1) Frame – 15%

Rump (5 points): Should be long and wide throughout. Pin bones should be slightly lower than hip bones with adequate width between the pins. Thurls should be wide apart. Vulva should be nearly vertical and the anus should not be recessed. Tail head should set slightly above and neatly between pin bones with freedom from coarseness. **Front End (5 points):** Adequate constitution with front legs straight, wide apart, and squarely placed. Shoulder blades and elbows set firmly against the chest wall. The crops should have adequate fullness blending into the shoulders. **Back/Loin (2 points):** Back should be straight and strong, with loin broad, strong, and nearly level. **Stature (2 points):** Height including length in the leg bones with a long bone pattern throughout the body structure. Height at withers and hips should be relatively proportionate. Age and breed stature recommendations are to be considered. **Breed Characteristics (1 point):** Exhibiting overall style and balance. Head should be feminine, clean-cut, slightly dished with broad muzzle, large open nostrils and strong jaw.

Figure 2: Rump Structure



Reverse Tilt
Pins higher than hooks



Nearly level
from hooks to pins



Extreme slope from
hooks to pins

2) Dairy Strength - 25%

A combination of dairyness and strength that supports sustained production and longevity. Major consideration is given to general openness and angularity while maintaining strength, width of chest, spring of fore rib, and substance of bone without coarseness. Body condition should be appropriate for stage of lactation. Listed in priority order, the descriptions of the traits to be considered are as follows:

Ribs (8 points): Wide apart. Rib bones wide, flat, deep, and slanted towards the rear. Well sprung, expressing fullness and extending outside the point of elbows. **Chest (6 points):** Deep and wide floor showing capacity for vital organs, with well-sprung fore ribs. **Barrel (4 points):** Long, with adequate depth and width, increasing toward the rear with a deep flank. **Thighs (2 points):** Lean, incurving to flat and wide apart from the rear. **Neck (2 points):** Long, lean, and blending smoothly into shoulders; clean-cut throat, dewlap, and brisket. **Withers (2 points):** Sharp with chine prominent. **Skin (1 point):** Thin, loose, and pliable.

Figure 3: Rib Types



Figure 4: Barrel Types



3) Rear Feet and Legs - 20%

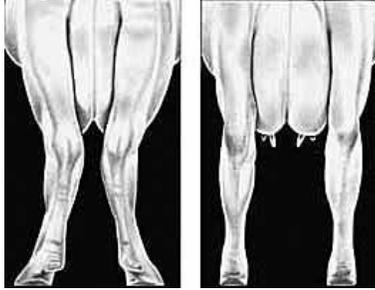
Feet and rear legs are evaluated. Evidence of mobility is given major consideration. Listed in priority order, the descriptions of the traits to be considered are as follows:

Movement (5 points): The use of feet and rear legs, including length and direction of step. When walking naturally, the stride should be long and fluid with the rear feet nearly replacing the front feet. **Rear Legs-Side View (3 points):** Moderate set (angle) to the hock. **Rear Legs-Rear View (3 points):** Straight, wide apart with feet squarely placed. **Feet (3 points):** Steep angle and deep heel with short, well-rounded closed toes. **Thurl Position (2 points):** Near central placement between the hip and pin bones. **Hocks (2 points):** Adequate flexibility with freedom from swelling. **Bone (1 point):** Flat and clean with adequate substance. **Pasterns (1 point):** Short and strong with some flexibility, having a moderate, upright angle.

Figure 5: Foot angle



Figure 6: Rear Legs Back View



Hocked -in Correct

Figure 7: Rear Legs Side View



Post-legged Correct Sickle-hocked

4) Udder - 40%

The udder traits are evaluated. Major consideration is given to the traits that contribute to high milk yield and a long productive life. Listed in priority order, the descriptions of the traits to be considered are as follows:

Udder Depth (10 points): Moderate depth relative to the hock with adequate capacity and clearance. Consideration is given to lactation number and age. **Rear Udder (9 points):** Wide and high, firmly attached with uniform width from top to bottom and slightly rounded to udder floor. **Teat Placement (5 points):** Squarely placed under each quarter, plumb and properly spaced. **Udder Cleft (5 points):** Evidence of a strong suspensory ligament indicated by clearly defined halving. **Fore Udder (5 points):** Firmly attached with moderate length and ample capacity. **Teats (3 points):** Cylindrical shape; uniform size with medium length and diameter; neither short nor long is desirable. **Udder Balance and Texture (3 points):** Udder floor level as viewed from the side. Quarters evenly balanced; soft, pliable, and well collapsed after milking. **(Note: In the Holstein breed, an equal emphasis is placed on fore and rear udder (7 points each). All other traits are the same as listed above.)**

Figure 8: Rear Udder Height



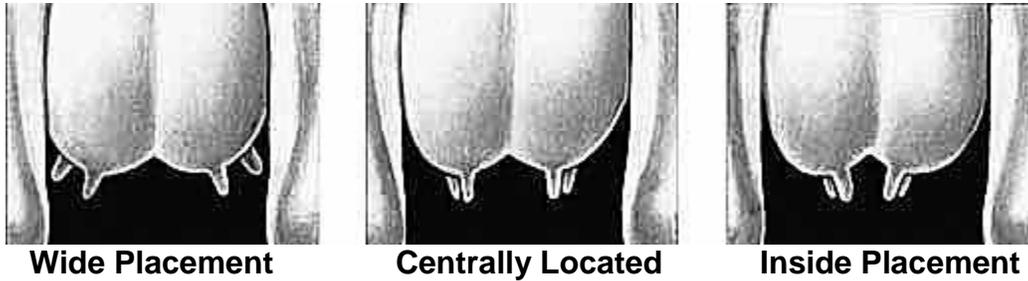
Low Intermediate High

Figure 9: Fore Udder Attachment



Loose Intermediate Strong

Figure 10: Teat Placement



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How to Mark Your Card

Learning to mark your card correctly is an important part of judging any species of animal. First you need to make sure you write legibly on your card which looks like the figure below. Make sure you have your contestant number that you have been assigned, your name and county on all of your cards before the judging contest begins. Once the class enters the ring, the announcer will announce the class name and number which should be clearly written on your card. If it is a reasons class you will also need to write down the class name on your reasons notes. All the animals in the class will be clearly identified with a number. Once you have decided the order you would like the animals placed then you will mark your placing on your card. For example if you want to place the class 3 first, 2 second, 1 third and 4 last then you would mark letter O. You may either circle the combination you choose or put an X next to the combination you like.

Figure 11: Placing Card

Contestant Number _____
 Placing Score _____

*University of Kentucky
 College of Agriculture
 Animal Sciences Department*

Contestant's Name
 - Susie Farmer -

Address

County
 ___ Fayette ___

Class

A	1 2 3 4	_____
B	1 2 4 3	_____
C	1 3 2 4	_____
D	1 3 4 2	_____
E	1 4 2 3	_____
F	1 4 3 2	_____
G	2 1 3 4	_____
H	2 1 4 3	_____
I	2 3 1 4	_____
J	2 3 4 1	_____
K	2 4 1 3	_____
L	2 4 3 1	_____
M	3 1 2 4	_____
N	3 1 4 2	_____
O	3 2 1 4	X _____
P	3 2 4 1	_____
Q	3 4 1 2	_____
R	3 4 2 1	_____
S	4 1 2 3	_____
T	4 1 3 2	_____
U	4 2 1 3	_____
V	4 2 3 1	_____
W	4 3 1 2	_____
X	4 3 2 1	_____

Oral Reasons

Learning to give oral reasons can be one of the most challenging things to learn when dairy judging, but it can also be one of the most rewarding. Being able to justify how you placed a class of dairy animals is very important, it really takes learning to judge dairy cattle to the next level. However, this is something that takes practice and patience to learn to do well.

The first step is to learn to take notes. The example notes format on page 9 can be very helpful especially when first learning to take notes. Make sure you write down the class name and your placing on your notes form. Next write down a general description of each animal. This can be something that helps you remember what the animals looked like in the ring.

Once you are ready to write down your actual reasons for placing each pair of animals in the class remember to list the most important things first. It is also a good idea to develop some type of shorthand or abbreviations for your terms. This will help give you more room to write and organize your thoughts. You always want to list at least one grant for each pair of animals.

Here are a few basic tips for giving oral reasons:

- Reasons should be 1 ½ to 2 minutes in length.
- Do not use any notes when giving your reasons (notes may be used for junior members giving reasons for the first time)
- Organize reasons in the following order
 1. State the class (age and breed)
 2. State your placing (use a brief description of each animal as you become more confident in your reasons)
 3. List comparative reasons for your top pair and then give a grant
 4. List comparative reasons for your middle pair and give a grant
 5. List comparative reasons for your bottom pair and give a grant
 6. Restate the class and your placing (may add a reinforce statement as to why you placed the bottom animal last as you become more experienced in giving reasons)
- Accuracy is critical. Do not lie, make up points or generalize.
- Use comparative terms like the terms on page 8. Do not just describe the animals.
- Avoid using general terms such as good, or better. Tell how the animal was more correct than the other animal. Make sure you use connecting terms and phrasing to make your reasons flow. Examples include: furthermore, likewise, in addition, to complement this, moreover, additionally, and also just to name a few.
- Use transition statements when moving between pairs – A few examples of transition statements are: In moving to my middle pair; 4 follows the type pattern set by 2; In my middle placing, 3 places over 2; Going now to my final placing, of 2 over 4; It is because of this advantage in; 3 places over 2.
- When giving a grant statement make sure you change the phrase you use for example you may use statements like: I do concede; I admit, however, that; I do realize that; however, 3 has; recognizing, however, that; and granted 4 is. . .
- Delivery – use a conversational, enthusiastic voice; be confident but do not yell. Also make sure you do not talk too fast or too softly.
- Make eye contact with the judge. Stand with your feet placed squarely apart and do not sway.

Sample set of oral reasons

I placed this class of 3-year-old Holstein cows, 4-1-3-2. 4 excels the class in strength of udder attachments and power. Because of her advantage in udder, 4 places over 1. 4 has a higher and wider rear udder attachment, and more bloom to the udder today. Also, 4 displays more strength throughout the front end, being wider at the chest floor than 1. A last point in 4's favor is she shows more depth of rear rib than does 1. Recognizing however, that 1 is a taller and longer individual.

1, the horned cow, places over 3 because she is taller at the point of withers and is longer through the barrel and shows more length from hips to pins. To complement this, 1 has a distinct advantage in dairyness, being sharper at the withers and showing more definition of the hooks and pins. Granted, 3 is a more powerfully-built cow, displaying more width of chest floor and more boldly sprung ribs.

In my bottom placing, 3 easily places over 2 because of her decided advantage in udder. 3 has a firmer fore udder attachment and more desirable teat shape, criticizing 2's teats for being funnel-shaped. Furthermore, 3 is straighter over the topline than is 2, with a stronger loin and a tail head that sits more neatly between a wider set of pin bones. I do concede 2 has a longer, leaner neck and is more angular throughout.

I admire 2's sharpness, however I feel justified in placing 2 at the bottom of this class because she lacks the straightness of lines and strength of udder attachments to place any higher in this class of Holstein 3-year-olds that I have placed 4-1-3-2.

References

Dairy Cow Unified Score Card. The Purebred Dairy Cattle Association. Brattleboro, VT. 2009.

South Dakota Dairy Judging Guide. June 2009. Publication Number 4HYD429.

Stamschror, J., Seykora, T. and Hansen, L. July 2000. Judging Dairy Cattle. University of Minnesota Extension Service.

The Holstein Foundation's Dairy Judging Workbook. Holstein Foundation. Brattleboro, VT. 2010.

Comparative Terms to Use

Frame:	Longer and leaner about the neck
Rump:	Carries less excess flesh
More nearly level from hooks to pins	Sharper at the point of withers
More length or longer from hooks to pins	Cleaner down her topline
Tailhead that sits more neatly between a wider set of pin bones	More prominent about the hooks and pins
More width of/wider rump	Flatter (leaner or thinner) in the thighs
Slopes less from hooks to pins	More incurving about the thighs
More nearly level over the rump	Flatter boned
More correct slope to the rump	Feet and Legs
Thurls more centrally located between the hooks and pins	Walks on a more correct set of feet and legs
Wider through the pins	Tracks straighter when viewed from the behind
More moderate slope from hooks to pins	More correct set to the hock
Squarer out over the rump	Cleaner more refined hock
Lower in the pins	Moves more freely with more strength of pastern and more depth of heel
More width /wider at the thurls	Stands more squarely on her rear legs
Front End:	More flex of the hock
Blends more smoothly from neck to shoulder	More strength of pastern
Tighter in the shoulder	Steeper foot angle
Tighter at the point of elbow	Stronger pasterns
Less prominent at the point of elbow	More depth of heel
Fuller in the crops	Shows less or more set to the hock
More harmonious blending through the front end	Deeper in the heel
Blends more smoothly throughout	Udder
Back/Loin:	She shows more bloom and capacity of udder
Straighter topline especially stronger in the loin (or chine)	Milkier appearing udder
Straighter and stronger over the top	More prominent veining
Harder down her topline	Shows more apparent udder quality
Leveler down the topline	Larger more capacious udder
Stature:	More youthful udder carried higher above the hocks
Taller and longer	Stronger median suspensory ligament
More upstanding	Deeper crease in her udder
Excels in size and scale	More clearly defined udder halves
Taller at the point of withers	Stronger center support
Longer or stretchier from end to end	Leveler udder floor
Head:	More balance and symmetry to the udder
More feminine about the head and neck	More balance to the udder
More breed character about the head	Less quartering when viewed from the side
Cleaner more refined head	More nearly level udder floor when viewed from the side
Wider muzzle	
Style:	Rear Udder:
More style and balance throughout	Higher in the rear udder attachment
A more youthful appearance	Wider in the rear udder attachment
Straighter lined individual	Fuller at the top of the rear udder
More stylish from head to tail	More fullness to the rear quarters
Dairy Strength	More balance and symmetry of the rear udder
Strength:	More balance of the rear quarters
Stronger, more powerful cow	More capacious rear udder
Shows more openness of rib	
Greater spring of fore and/or rear rib	Teats:
Greater depth of fore and/or rear rib	More desirable teat size and shape and/or placement
More strength and power throughout	Teats hang more perpendicular to the ground
More depth and spring of rib	Teats more squarely placed on the quarters of the udder
More width and strength throughout	Teats placed more central beneath the quarters
Wider through the chest floor	More desirable front teat placement
Stronger through the front end	More desirable rear teat placement
Greater overall capacity	
Dairyness:	Fore Udder:
More angularity	Smoother fore udder attachment
More dairyness throughout	Snugger fore udder attachment
More angularity and openness of rib	Fore udder blends more smoothly into the body wall
More sweep to the rib	Fore udder closer to the body wall
Shows more refinement of bone	More firmly attached fore udder
Milkier appearance	Longer fore udder
Cleaner and more angular	Less bulgy fore udder

Oral Reasons Notes

Students Name: _____ Your Placing: _____

Class Breed and age: _____

Description:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Pairs	Reasons	Grants
Top Pair _____ over _____		
Middle Pair _____ over _____		
Bottom Pair _____ over _____		

Reasons for placing the last animal fourth: _____

